



*Chair, Families & Human
Services Committee
Appropriations Committee;
Chair, Family Independence
Agency; Commerce Labor
& Economic Development;
Capitol Outlay;
Higher Education*

*SENATOR
BILL HARDIMAN*

E-Hardiman Herald



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Senate approves parental-notification bill for abortions

The Senate approved a bipartisan measure that governs the granting or denial of parental consent waivers for minors considering an abortion.

House Bill 4478 sponsored by Representative William O'Neil creates standards for judges when they consider a parental-notification waiver and prohibits a minor from "judge shopping" or re-filing a waiver petition if she already has been denied one for the same pregnancy. Senator Hardiman is recognized as a spokesperson on life and marriage issues, and he chaired the legislative committee that reviewed HB 4478.

Senator Hardiman made the following statement regarding this legislation: "Minors need parental approval when getting a tattoo or their ears pierced. They most certainly should have parental consent when considering a choice involving life or death. This legislation makes it clear that parents should be involved. It also sets standards for judges to determine when parental involvement would not be wise or helpful. The legislation aims to serve the best interest of all the individuals involved in such a crucial decision."

"I am concerned about protecting the family. Parental rights are essential to protection of the family structure in our society," Hardiman said. The House passed HB 4478 with strong support and is likely to concur in the few Senate changes.

Senate protects children from lead poisoning

The Senate unanimously approved legislation this week that helps protect children from lead poisoning, ensuring that they won't endure the mental and developmental disabilities that lead poisoning causes. While lead paint was banned in 1978, some housing units, particularly in older, poorer neighborhoods, still have lead-based paint in them.

Senator Hardiman sponsored one of the bills, Senate Bill 756, which requires the state Department of Community Health to create a public list of rental or leased housing units that have been deemed free of lead-based paint. A certified lead-paint risk assessor would make that determination.

The package also requires laboratories that perform tests on lead levels in blood to report the findings to the Department of Community Health and prohibits landlords from knowingly renting or leasing with lead paint hazards. In addition, the legislation will create a lead poisoning prevention and control commission. The commission will draw upon the knowledge and expertise of a broad group of experts in lead issues and will make further recommendations to the legislature and administration.

The bills now head to the House of Representatives for consideration.

Senate supports federal jobs initiative

State senators are welcoming President George W. Bush's continued commitment to higher education after announcing his new "Jobs for the 21st Century" initiative during the State of the Union address. The plan would increase support for America's community colleges to train workers for the industries that are creating the most new jobs. The plan includes a \$250 million proposal to fund partnerships between community colleges and employers in high-demand job sectors, based on successful pilot programs launched by Bush in 2001 and 2002. In Michigan, this plan would be helpful to provide necessary training for current students and unemployed workers to get them out into the workforce to reverse Michigan's increasing unemployment rate.

In addition to funding for community colleges, the Jobs for the 21st Century plan also is designed to provide extra help to middle and high school students who fall behind in reading and math, expand Advanced Placement programs in low-income schools, and invite math and science professionals from the private sector to teach part-time in high schools.

Theology, religious education students allowed to receive state scholarships

Earlier this week the Senate passed a package of bills removing the prohibition against students of theology, divinity and religious education majors from receiving grants or scholarships from the state of Michigan. The seven bill, bi-partisan sponsored package will end the practice of discrimination against certain types of academic study. Teresa Becker, of Northern Michigan, is a student who does not have equal access to the more than \$242 million awarded yearly to students in grants and scholarships because she chose to study theology. Becker filed a lawsuit against the state last year when they rescinded her scholarship based on her major of study. Federal District Judge George Caram Steeh ruled the state is prohibited from enforcing the statute preventing her from receiving scholarship money. The legislation would affect five main programs: The Michigan Legislative Award, the Michigan Educational Opportunity Grant, the Michigan Competitive Scholarship, the Part-time Independent Student Grant, and the state's Tuition Grant programs. Senate Bills 625-629, and 661 and 662 all passed with a bi-partisan vote and now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

People's Override initiative launched at the state capitol

Members of the Michigan Senate joined leadership from Right to Life of Michigan, the Michigan Catholic Conference, and other organizations to kick off the "People's Override," a citizens' petition drive to enact the Legal Birth Definition Act. Supporters of the initiative must

gather 254,206 signatures of registered voters to put the issue before the legislature. Then a simple majority vote in both chambers will put the law into effect. The Legal Birth Definition Act defines legal birth at the point when any non-severed portion of the child emerges from the mother. Once a person is legally born, that person is afforded all of the rights of legal personhood.

Consolidated elections

Under legislation recently passed and signed into law, election dates in Michigan will be consolidated to four specific dates each year. This legislation will allow citizens to always be aware of voting dates and will save taxpayers money. The four dates will take place on specified Tuesdays in February, May, August, and November. A fifth "floater" date is possible for school districts to hold an election for a millage or bond issue if enough petition signatures are obtained. However, the election must still be held on a Tuesday and may not be held 30 days before or 35 days after one of the four dates above.

Snowmobile safety

Residents of Michigan are reminded to use extreme caution during the winter months as they pull their snowmobiles out of storage and hit the trails. Last year, 46 people were killed in snowmobile accidents, many due to unsafe procedures. Before heading out, know the rules and weather conditions, dress appropriately and wear a helmet. State law requires that riders wear a U.S. Department of Transportation-approved crash helmet. Other safety practices include slowing down on the trails, never riding alone, not traveling across frozen water and not drinking before or while riding. In addition, leave a travel plan with your destination and timetable in case of emergencies.

Contact Information

The Hardiman Herald by Senator Bill Hardiman is designed to provide residents and organizations with a timely update of his activity in Lansing. If you have any questions or do not wish to receive this e-mail, please contact Senator Hardiman's office.

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